

Preface

Tosaka Jun (1900–1945) was one of the boldest, most creative theoreticians to come out of modern Japan. His critique of Japanism, *The Japanese Ideology* (*Nippon ideorogiron*, 1935), remains one of the most original theorizations of fascism ever written, certainly in the case of modern Japan. Yet despite this significant work, Tosaka has been almost completely ignored in Japanese studies and philosophy in the West. To date, the few pieces that have appeared in translation pigeonhole Tosaka as a minor materialist corrective to some of the more religious and idealist aspects of the Kyoto School of Japanese philosophy.¹ In direct contrast to this approach, the essays and translations here demonstrate that Tosaka's critique of Japan and Japanism in the 1930s was not the work of a mere materialist tarrying around the edges of Japanese thought and society: It was total. His project—at once a philosophy of science, a philosophy of history, and a cultural critique—not only explodes the traditional view of prewar Japanese thought, but also continues to shed light on the most urgent and persistent problems in philosophy and politics, especially the deep relationships between capitalism, nationalism, liberalism, fascism, and everyday life.

Like the groundbreaking debate on Japanese capitalism in the 1920s–1930s, this volume reveals Japanese criticism of the 1930s, of which Tosaka was at the lead, as a discourse that can stand beside classic Marxist social and cultural critics such as Antonio Gramsci, Siegfried Kracauer,

1. This is the approach used in *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, where in their introduction the editors quote favorably Tanabe Hajime's dismissal of Tosaka as a mere theorist of science, a thinker who "as a philosopher . . . leaves much to be desired"; see David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Vigliemo, eds., *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 323.

Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and Ernst Bloch. Beyond this resonance with contemporaries, Tosaka's focus on the global nature of the capitalist system further reveals his work as a powerful corrective to the Eurocentrism of what is commonly called "Western Marxism." Tosaka's writings on the deep connections between capitalism, liberalism, and fascism also stand in direct contrast to, and deserve to be debated against, the overly narrow theories of fascism such as Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* or the pessimistic turn of the later Frankfurt School signaled by *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Like Tosaka's own desire to investigate the specific cultural effects operating in everyday life that make up fascist ideology, the translations and essays in this volume, too, are held together by his contagious and persistent hope that a rethinking of materialism in its everydayness can produce sharper revolutionary critiques of capitalism.

The revival of Tosaka's project represented by this book shows that despite the extreme physical and intellectual isolation he endured in his own time, today his work resonates with many contemporary anticapitalist thinkers. Prefiguring Henri Lefebvre's critiques of everyday life, Tosaka in the 1930s articulated the importance of thinking about revolutionary politics in Japan in relation to a critical analysis of the space of everyday life, showing with great rigor how, within those diffused spaces, the (liberal) ideology of the nation disavowed the social and class antagonisms effected by Japan's capitalist development, especially after its invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Originally a philosopher of science, Tosaka's melding of neo-Kantianism and Marxism led him to analyze the political and philosophical meanings of technology that went beyond mechanistic interpretations of the "mode of production," thereby anticipating contemporary theorizations of technology by Negri, Virno, and others on "general intellect." And with Tosaka's theorization of concepts such as "technical standards," he also prefigures many contemporary theorists in science and technology studies working on techno-politics. Most enduringly, however, Tosaka's understanding of what he called "cultural liberalism" and its relation to fascist ideology places him in the company of a line of anticapitalist thinkers from the past and the present—from Walter Benjamin to Gramsci to more contemporary thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek—who have tried to supplement Marxism's original critiques of classical political economy with a methodical critique of cultural production in the present.

Despite this interesting conjunction, the value of Tosaka's thought is hardly found merely in its resonances with radical thinkers in the European world. Rather, it is found in Tosaka's clear vision of how capitalist development in a time of imperialist war and chronic recession placed Japan as an important "link" in the world system of capitalist domination with specific effects on the level of cultural production. Thus, rather than treat Tosaka as a particular example from Japan who addressed similar questions related to culture, ideology, and fascism in Europe, it is best to read Tosaka as someone who understood how many of the capitalist world's contradictions condensed and were fused in the nation-state called Japan and in Japan's expanding empire of the 1930s.

As H. D. Harootunian's introduction to this volume shows, Tosaka's status as one of the few prewar Marxists who did not recant his leftist allegiances and convert to right wing or Japanist views (the *tenkō* phenomenon) meant that he possessed potentially tremendous moral authority in the chaos and possibilities of the immediate postwar moment. And so his absence from the postwar moment needs explanation. In fact, Tosaka's position as a thinker of the *global* nature of the crisis of the 1930s, the very thing that makes his resurrection so valuable to us today, is also likely the very thing that condemned him and his thought to isolation and neglect both in his own time and in the postwar era. In the case of the immediate postwar world Tosaka's critique was marginalized, indeed completely ignored, by the nation-bound thinking on both left and right.

On the left, Tosaka's critique ran afoul of the Japanese Communist Party's (JCP) allegiance to a Moscow-inspired Japan policy of two-stage revolution—one that must start with a bourgeois, national revolution. Partly a continuation of the legendary and epic debate on Japanese capitalism of the 1920s–1930s (*Nihon shihonshugi ronsō*), the JCP held that the Meiji Restoration of 1868 had retained too many feudal elements and thus failed to establish a properly bourgeois state. Moscow and the JCP could thus explain away Japanese fascism as a consequence of lingering Japanese feudalism. It followed from this thesis that the immediate postwar political task of the JCP had to be the completion of a Japanese bourgeois revolution.

Outside Marxist circles during the occupation (1945–1952), U.S. officials at the head of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), too, sought to eliminate fascist elements of Japanese society in the name of liberal democracy—a political system, they argued, that had

been doing just fine until it was hijacked by ultranationalist militarism and emperor fanaticism. SCAP's position contributed to the widespread belief in postwar Japanese society that fascism in Japan represented a mere deviation from the liberal democracy and free market capitalism that flourished in 1920s Japan. SCAP moved to connect with 1920s capitalists to restart the process of Japanese capitalist development before the perceived false turn of fascism—a turn they located very late in the process: sometime in the late 1930s or even the early 1940s.

But the barriers to Tosaka's resurrection continued. His central thesis—an insistence on the immanent nature of fascism within capitalism and liberalism—was not only taboo for the SCAP fascist hunters, it was also more than a little inconvenient for postwar liberals such as Maruyama Masao, who, like SCAP officials, sought to ignore completely the critical period of the 1930s–1940s. However, instead of embracing SCAP's desire to return to the 1920s, Japanese liberals looked to return to the birth of liberalism in the Popular Rights and Liberty Movement (*Jiyū minken undō*) of the 1870s–1880s. Here, too, Tosaka was already ahead of them, having demonstrated how the very liberalism these thinkers sought to recover was actually the source of the fascism they thought they were escaping.

Unlike the newly ascendant JCP, SCAP, or postwar liberals like Maruyama, Tosaka refused to accept the nation-state as the essential, *a priori* ground of analysis. Here Tosaka's criticism of capitalism and culture must once again come to the fore because for him the feudal Japanist culture that suffused and supported the Japanese war machine of the 1930s–1940s merely expressed the deeper *cultural logic* inherent in capitalism itself, including the liberal variety. His masterpiece, *The Japanese Ideology*, is in fact split into two sections: Japanism and liberalism. The point is to show the inherent family resemblances between the two. Further, Tosaka saw ways in which the feudal past, far from being a barrier to a fully realized, modern capitalism, could in fact support, and even augment, capitalist development. In this theory, the imagined ethnic community of the Japanese past was detached from its socioeconomic base, becoming a free-floating cultural form grafted onto class antagonisms in the present and veiling these antagonisms behind a harmonious folkic capitalism. In his thinking on the positive and proactive uses of culture for politics within capitalism in *The Japanese Ideology*, Tosaka preceded Herbert

Marcuse's contemporary thinking on the same subject, especially his "The Affirmative Nature of Culture" (1937).

The key to Tosaka's disappearance then—and his reappearance now—is his insistence on locating both liberalism and fascism within and constituted by what he called cultural liberalism: a realm of idealism and religious consciousness originally established as a private space of freedom of conscience necessary for the production of the liberal subject. But in an inherently contradictory and unstable capitalist society increasingly rent by class struggle, this space of cultural liberalism cannot remain a safe, idealist harbor for apolitical individuals; in a crisis like the 1930s, it must eventually become the space not of individual freedom but of (Japanist) cultural freedom. In the essay "Just What Is a Crisis of Culture?" from his *Japan as a Link in the World* (*Sekai no ikkan toshite no Nihon*, 1937), Tosaka demonstrated succinctly and chillingly how individual freedom becomes freedom of the (national) culture and all progress becomes cultural (nationalist) progress.² Contrary to SCAP and all liberal opponents of fascism, the genius of Tosaka's analysis of his own present was to show how fascism is anything but a deviation from liberal democracy; rather, it is born in the crucible of liberalism and capitalism's endemic cyclical crises and wars.

Reading Tosaka today it is clear that the problems he so boldly took on in 1930s Japan still resonate with our present crisis, which is often referred to as the greatest since (Tosaka's own) Great Depression. From the financial crisis to new calls for a return to hard money, popular protest against austerity measures and the state violence that seeks to implement them, and renewed calls for "American exceptionalism" to the growing unrest and fragmentations on the left and right across the globe, it is apparent that our relevant historical conjuncture is not, as the neoliberals would have it, the heyday but more likely the collapse of the 1920s liberal figurations of nation, state, and capital. In Tosaka's time, this collapse led globally to the rise of a new, fascist figuration. At the same time, Tosaka's critique of fascism—as an everyday phenomenon linked inextricably to cultural liberalism—is more relevant than ever for an understanding not simply of past fascisms, but for a contemporary critique of the fascisms

2. Tosaka Jun, "Bunka no kiki to wa nani ka?" in *Tosaka Jun zenshū* (Tokyo, Keisō shobō: 1966), 5:62. See also Robert Stolz's chapter in this volume.

today around the world. In our own present, with its endless repetition of transhistorical mythologies, archaisms, and idealist notions of communal belonging, when multiculturalism is compulsively repeated in ways that would seem to make a farce out of how past forms of fascism succeeded in erasing world capitalism's class antagonisms, Tosaka's critique of cultural liberalism is more useful than ever for a contemporary critique of capitalism and fascism. Indeed, we have likely entered a new period that shares more than just a few ominous family resemblances with the 1930s. Of course, this repetition would not have shocked Tosaka—that it shocks so many contemporary observers left and right shows just how much we have lost and forgotten of the disaster of the 1930s. In our own still capitalist and crisis-ridden present, we can and should read Tosaka as a warning of the ever-present possibility of fascism, the ghost in the machine suffusing capitalist thought, ideology, and everyday life.

The translations and essays in this volume come from the critical period in Japanese history from the Manchurian Incident in 1931 to the outbreak of total war in 1937. This period matches roughly the years Tosaka was active as the editor of, and frequent contributor to, the influential materialism journal *Yuibutsuron kenkyū* (*Studies in Materialism*), which was published from 1932 to 1938, when it disbanded due to increasing police harassment. That same year Tosaka was arrested and imprisoned, largely ending his publishing career. In and out of prison between 1938 and 1944, Tosaka died in his cell in Nagano on August 9, 1945, the day the Japanese high command met to discuss surrender.

By bringing together both previously untranslated texts and original essays, this book reveals Tosaka as a major materialist philosopher and critic. The translations in Part I not only fill a great gap in available primary sources of Tosaka's writings, but also reveal the depth and breadth of this extremely important and original thinker to English audiences. Here we find some of Tosaka's most important essays and excerpts from his masterpiece, *The Japanese Ideology*, as well as *Thought and Custom* (*Shisō to fūzoku*, 1936) and *Japan as a Link in the World*. In these texts we can see how Tosaka strove to extend Marxist critiques of capitalism to the realm of culture and expand the possible points of radical critique to science, space, everydayness, the police, journalism, film, and the critique of liberalism. The first translations, "The Principle of Everydayness and Historical Time" and "On Space," immediately immerse the reader in Tosa-

ka's fundamental philosophical materialism, the basis from which he developed his later critiques. The focus on the everyday is furthered and deepened in "The Academy and Journalism" and two important texts on film, "Film as a Reproduction of the Present" and "Film Art and Film." "Laughter, Comedy, and Humor" contains Tosaka's thoughts on the politicality and the possibility of humor as a critical tool, especially when written, as many of these texts were, under the constant threat of censorship. Three essays from *The Japanese Ideology* ("Liberalist Philosophy and Materialism," "Theory of the Intelligentsia and Theory of Technology," "The Fate of Japanism") develop the connection between cultural liberalism and its fate in an increasingly technocratic and fascist organization of capital accumulation. And from *Japan as a Link in the World* comes "The Police Function," which examines the role of police repression in terms of a blurring of the concepts of public and private.

The seven critical essays in Part II demonstrate the robustness of Tosaka's critique not only by deepening Tosaka's analysis, but also because they expand its application into new issues. The point is not merely to introduce Tosaka's thought, as important as that may be, but to use Tosaka as a critical resource for our own time. The essays here do this by fruitfully reviving Tosaka's categories and logic with issues Tosaka himself did not address, such as the intractable problems of immigrant day laborers and the environmental crisis. Robert Stolz's "Here, Now: Everyday Space as Cultural Critique" demonstrates how Tosaka's basic philosophical materialism and its intense focus on "everydayness" not only was the basis for his more famous cultural criticism, but also remains a useful way for thinking through our present problems of capitalist society, including the environmental crisis. Through a comparison with similar work from Frankfurt School writers, Fabian Schäfer's essay illuminates Tosaka's prescient insight into journalism's key ideological functions and how these can be emancipatory or reactionary. Katsuya Hirano, writing on the "dialectic of laughter," explores Tosaka's thoughts in relation to Henri Bergson and Louis Althusser in an important discussion of customs (*fūzoku*). This leads to a critique of the bourgeois ideology of individualism that hides the workings of popular custom and morality as a primary regulatory and normalizing force enabling the reproduction and perpetuation of social order. Takeshi Kimoto examines Tosaka's engagement with the prewar debate on technology, analyzing his critiques of a "mechanistic" approach to technology within Marxism. Demonstrating how Tosa-

ka's notion of the "technical standard" anticipates many contemporary theories of "general intellect," Kimoto argues that Tosaka's reflections on technology help contemporary critical thought move beyond simple binaries of idealism and materialism.

Using a wide array of contemporary and current thinkers, Gavin Walker shows how Tosaka's project centered on the epistemology of the everyday—and especially the social position of film. Tosaka developed an original notion of matter irreducible to physical materiality but linked instead to a concept of matter as "custom" or everyday social practice. Walker argues that this crucial innovation, extending and deepening the concept of matter at the core of Marxist philosophy, points the way to a desperately needed rethinking and rehabilitation of historical materialism and the possibility of revolutionary critiques and practices in the present. Ken C. Kawashima's essay on the "police function" traces a shift in the sociopolitical role of the police—from protector of the regime of private property to, following the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the rice riots in Japan in 1918, a new form of cultural police that mobilized the whole population to become a police of the public and even private good. Kawashima contends this cultural policing to be an essential element of capital-state relations with deep consequences for understanding everyday life in capitalist society. Katsuhiko Endo's essay, which closes the section, goes the furthest of all in showing the truly catastrophic result of the intimate relations between capitalism, liberalism, and fascism. With help from Uno Kōzō's similar thoughts on political economy, Endo pushes the analysis to its end point in the new Japanist figuration of nation, state, and capital, all the way to the horror and atrocities that mark Japan's Fifteen-Year War in Asia.

In conclusion, the editors wish to dedicate this volume to Harry Harootunian, who introduced and taught so many of us about both Tosaka and the possibility, indeed the necessity, of constant, vigilant criticism.